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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT VOLTA Electro-Motor Plant Tallinn: Administration/
Production/Expansion/Raw Material/Plan Fulfillment/
Damaged Shipments

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1. The following information on the VOLTA Electro-Motor Plant in Tallinn, Estonian SSR, dates through September 1953.
2. Administration "The VOLTA Electro-Motor Plant is subordinated directly to the All-Union Ministry for Power Stations and the Electrical Industry in Moscow. The local Estonian ministries have no say in its management, production plans or distribution of output. The only thing in which they may interfere is the political instruction of the workers and the agitation for greater production.
3. Production and Distribution "Starting in spring 1953 the plant has laid greatest stress on the manufacture of large motors, 1000 KW and over. The VOLTA plant specializes in the production of asynchronous motors. In 1948 the VOLTA engineers made a new model of this type of motor. Mass production of such motors was started in 1949. Most of the Soviet plants do not manufacture such motors. That is the reason why VOLTA output goes to the farthest corners of the USSR. The large motors (3 m high) - 1000 KW and over - go to the Kuibyshev, Stalingrad and Kakhovka power stations exclusively. Smaller models go elsewhere. A number go to the construction works of the Turkmen Canal. Their volume is 245 KW and they are used for elevators (cranes). Similar motors are also sent to the building industries in Moscow and to some mines. Motors have also been sent to the metallurgical works at Chelyabinsk, machine-building plants at Sverdlovsk, a crane factory at Borisov in the Byelorussian SSR, to Novosibirsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa and Leningrad. It was said that some motors have gone to the 'People's Democracies', probably Rumania, but no exact data on this are available. Daily 10-100 motors, depending on size, leave the plant.

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4. Expansion. "To supply the 'great Communist constructions' on the Volga and Don Rivers, the VOLTA plant has been enlarged. The new building started in the autumn of 1952 was ready in May 1953. It had so many defects, that Manager Mikhail Tikhonovich Pechenev refused to accept it. Repairs and alterations were undertaken but the whole is not fit for use yet. Only one department in the new building was in operation in September 1953: the casting department with about 200 workers.
5. Raw Material. "The casting departments have serious difficulties with raw material. Pig iron arrives from the USSR unsorted. Hence, about 15 per cent of the casting departments' output are rejects. Owing to the low quality of the raw material many of the parts are too hard and break when processed in other departments. This frustrates production plans. Whenever parts break down at an advanced stage of assembly, a complicated mechanism becomes a reject. Thus, in April 1953, the bodies of 560 motors had to be scrapped because of faulty parts. In May, 200 bodies were scrapped.
6. Plan Fulfillment. "Until 1952 the plant fulfilled its plan. In 1951 it even gave the State motors to the value of two million rubles over and above the plan. But that is a thing of the past. In 1952 all work norms were increased, and the plan was not fulfilled. The same is the case for the first two quarters of 1953 and will probably also be true for the third. Manager Pechenev is known to be doing his best to get transferred to some other plant. As a decent technician he understands that the plant will never be able to put out what the state demands of it with the existing equipment, material and workers. He fears that in the end he will be held responsible for the failure. Hitherto his efforts have been unsuccessful.
7. "Due to the accelerated work tempo caused by the heightened norms the percentage of rejects is increasing all the time. The lack of qualifications among the workers contributes to this. Some workers are given responsible jobs for no other qualification than political reliability. Komsomol girls have been given jobs in the technical control department where work is easier than elsewhere. Some of them do not even know how to use the appropriate measuring apparatus and cannot ascertain which parts are good and which should be rejected. As a result large numbers of shafts and panels which should be rejected are pronounced good and assembled into motors. The motors when tested prove no good in their turn. (One girl went to the other extreme: she sent back good rotors for alterations and approved others which were faulty.) With all these faults the motors, when ready, waste a lot more current than necessary. That would not be the case if they were built properly.
8. "Of course, this is not the fault of the girls alone but of the whole organization. The plant has a shop where its own measuring apparatus is manufactured. Since this shop does not directly contribute towards the fulfillment of plans it is very much neglected and cooped up in the worst and darkest premises. It has too little manpower. Instruments requiring great precision in execution are made in a hurry and therefore turn out inexact. The hurry is such that occasionally a half-finished instrument is carried off for use because it is needed at the Technical Control Department, their's having broken down. Since a hitch at 'Technical Control' would stop the entire plant, the management has no choice but to permit this practice - for it is better than nothing. There are never any reserves of instruments because the plan provides only for those which are actually in use and does not permit any storage.
9. Damaged Shipments. "From time to time some of VOLTA's output is destroyed in shipment. In December 1952 the plant was ordered to turn over 1224 small motors to the USSR Ministry for Building Materials, to be delivered to a ventilator factory at Krynokovo, RSFSR. VOLTA duly turned them over. VOLTA workers were told to put the motors, as they were, without any packing, in the yard of a sawmill belonging to the Estonian Ministry for Building Materials in Tallinn. Instead of being shipped to Krynokovo these motors were simply forgotten until they were discovered in February 1953, deep under snowdrifts, rusty and useless. Four hundred nevertheless were shipped to Krynokovo in this state; the rest were written off as scrap iron. Fortunately for VOLTA, the plant could not be blamed for their state; the blame fell on the two ministries involved and the railway administration which had not delivered the necessary freight cars when required."

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